

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

PREFACE

These Social Studies Standards are set forth to ensure graduates of South Dakota’s public schools have the knowledge, skills, and competencies essential to leading productive, fulfilling, and successful lives as they continue their education, enter the workforce, and assume their civic responsibilities.

In 1997, the South Dakota State Legislature passed SB170 that amended South Dakota Codified Law 13-3-48 to address the issue of challenging state content standards. The adopted amendment reads as follows: “The Secretary of the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs [now the Department of Education] shall prepare and submit for approval of the South Dakota Board of Education academic content standards in language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science for grades one through twelve. Each school district shall adopt and implement clearly defined and measurable course guidelines so as to meet the state academic content standards.”

With input from students, parents, teachers, and communities of South Dakota, the Social Studies Standards Revision Committee was charged with revision of the current South Dakota Content Standards and Performance Descriptors. The final document evolved from recent research in best practices in teaching, the No Child Left Behind legislation, experience in classrooms with the existing South Dakota Content Standards, the evolution of published standards from other states, the national standards for social studies, United States history, geography, civics, and economics and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) frameworks and descriptors, numerous professional publications, and lengthy discussions by experienced kindergarten through grade sixteen South Dakota educators. The state standards selected for use as references were those judged to be of the best quality by numerous national organizations. (See Appendix B for specific sources used.)

The content students need to acquire at each grade level is stated explicitly in these standards. With student mastery of this content, South Dakota schools will be competitive with the best educational systems in other states and nations. The standards are comprehensive and specific, they are rigorous, and they represent South Dakota’s commitment to excellence. The standards are firm but not unyielding; they will be modified in future years to reflect new research and scholarship.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SOUTH DAKOTA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS DOCUMENT

The South Dakota Social Studies Standards provide a listing of essential core content to be taught and learned. The standards are designed to guide the planning of instruction and to anchor the assessment of learning from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Performance descriptors bridge the content standards to assessments of the standards, provide information to teachers and students regarding student progress toward mastery of the standards, and specify targets for instruction and learning. The document presents a starting point for informed dialogue among those dedicated and committed to quality education in South Dakota. By providing a common set of goals and expectations for all students in all schools, this dialogue will be strengthened and enhanced.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

Perhaps more than any other discipline, the social studies can and should provide students an opportunity to grow as independent decision-makers. This burden informs pedagogy and strategy for instruction. The standards in this document must be considered a vehicle to greater educational goals. The standards are developmentally appropriate and logically sequenced for use as a framework to assist student growth in the following skills:

1. Responsible citizenship found in the Civics (Government) standards.
2. Spatial awareness found in the Geography standards.
3. Economic literacy found in the Economics standards.
4. Historical analysis found in the World and U.S. History standards.

Geography is studied through the framework of the five themes: Location, Place, Human-Environment Interaction, Movement, and Regions

In classrooms, teachers can use the above skills to evaluate instruction. In districts, curricular construction should make use of the above skills to color curricular decisions. And most significantly, statewide assessments shall focus on the measurement of the standards, using content as a tool to evaluate student growth in the above skills. The standards in this document provide a roadmap to avoid redundancy except when necessary and to supply consistency across the state. However, teachers are not restricted to only the content represented. The depth and breadth of the social studies should provide teachers endless possibilities to create enlivened lessons that foster student advancement in social studies skills. Teachers shall measure instructional success by student advancement and not the amount of material covered or the quantity memorized. The following standards can guide the content selection to promote student achievement but are not intended to limit instructional innovation. The social studies teacher aspires to provide instruction in the standards through meaningful, challenging, integrated, and active lessons. The standards support teachers in this quest.

The foundation of these state standards is designed to foster responsible decision making that benefits the local and tribal community, state, nation, and world. Responsible citizens are informed and active. They recognize their roles in connection with the world. The social studies standards are organized into five strands: U.S. History, World History, Geography, Civics (Government), and Economics. Each strand is addressed at every grade level with increasing rigor and relevance. Students in South Dakota should actively apply this knowledge through projects, classroom involvement, and volunteerism.

As students move from kindergarten through grade 12, levels of cognitive demand and complexity of content, skills, and processes increase. New skills emerge and basic skills are subsumed within more advanced skills as students progress through the grades. Based on information available through national standards work and developmental research, consideration has been given in these standards to the developmental appropriateness of skills required at each grade level. In consideration of developmental appropriateness, the committee has provided emphasis in each grade span as follows:

- Kindergarten through grade 2 standards emphasize building foundational skills in U.S. History, Geography, citizenship, patriotism, Civics, and Economics. Teachers guide students through a variety of activities to learn this content.
- Grades 3 through 5 standards continue the emphasis on citizenship in the larger community at grade 3, South Dakota history in the context of U.S. History and expansion at grade 4, and U. S. History at grade 5.
- Grades 6 through 8 emphasize World History, Geography, and U.S. History. Though the committee believes the understanding of personal finance is crucial to our economic development, it is difficult to provide an adequate emphasis for personal finance in the social studies standards alone. If at all possible, middle schools should integrate personal finance instruction into all areas of the curriculum.
- Grade 6 standards are a survey of World History prehistory to 1500 A.D.
- Grade 7 standards emphasize geographic skills and concepts.
- Grade 8 standards emphasize United States history from the Revolutionary War to Reconstruction.
- Grade 9 through 12 standards emphasize United States history from Reconstruction (1877) to the present-day.
- Grades 9 through 12 standards emphasize World History from the Renaissance to the present-day.
- Grades 9 through 12 standards emphasize continuing mastery of all of the strands through the integration and application of knowledge about the facts and events that shape history. At the high school level, Economics standards should be integrated into the teaching of U.S. History, World History, Geography, and Civics (Government) whether or not a separate economics class is available because an understanding of economics is central to the understanding of causes and effects in each of these social studies strands.
- Classes may be configured in many ways at the high school level. Whatever that configuration, all Core High School Standards should be embedded in the courses taken by all students as a condition of graduation from any South Dakota public school.
- The increase in the level of social studies mastery is a life-long process.

Grade-level standards specify what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level while curriculum specifies what teachers will teach. Because standards are not curriculum, any necessary review embedded in curriculum does not appear from grade-to-grade across grade-level standards. Teachers are charged with introducing skills in earlier grades before mastery is expected and with reviewing skills students will need to use in mastering the grade-level standards.

The Social Studies Standards Revision Committee developed these standards based on several concepts that all teachers and students of social studies should keep in mind during the learning process:

- Technology is a tool of social studies research and study. Information and communication technology literacy is important to social studies teaching and learning. Access to technology is an opportunity that should be available to every South Dakota student.
- Reading and mathematics are basic to the acquisition and communication of historic, geographic, economic, and civic knowledge. Emerging mastery of the social studies rests heavily upon students' application of reading and mathematics.
- Teaching and learning in a standards-based system is not a textbook-driven process. Textbooks are tools that, when used appropriately, enhance teaching and learning by providing instructional materials relevant to the specified standards.
- While standards are the core that all students should learn and master, teachers will expand upon these standards and introduce related topics to students in the course of instruction.
- The state of South Dakota offers many opportunities for learning about the history and geography of the United States and its diverse peoples. Teachers may take advantage of these opportunities to make social studies relevant to students. (See the Resource list in Appendix C for a few ideas.)
- Social Studies is participatory, not passive knowledge acquisition, especially in a democracy. While skills are taught through the content, hands-on opportunities for experiencing the analytical thinking, objective research, problem solving, and civic action that characterize responsible citizenship should be provided universally to every South Dakota student.
- World History standards have been created as a separate strand of social studies standards. This decision was made based both on the attention to World History in national standards and because the changing environment in which students live requires a global awareness that gives context to our own history and national aspirations.
- One of the two Civics (Government) indicators emphasizes the importance of citizenship and civic literacy. The committee feels this emphasis is necessary to develop the traits of responsible citizenship.
- Economic, financial, and business literacy are important to an understanding of historical events and outcomes, and are important to students' potential success in their lifetimes. There are many opportunities in social studies to teach students economic literacy and to practice relevant skills. Some examples have been provided, but they are by no means exhaustive. Resources are provided to assist teachers in further investigations in this area. (See Appendix C.)
- To achieve responsible citizenship, students need to be self-directed in their problem solving and decision making abilities. Every student of social studies should be given opportunities to learn, acquire, and apply problem-solving skills through problem-based learning activities in social studies.

- Community resources (such as veterans' and civic organizations, elected officials, and special interest groups) and current events can be used to bring social studies content to life and render the standards relevant to students.

Teachers and researchers have learned that in order for students to demonstrate mastery of skills specified in the standards on summative (end-of-year) assessments, **teachers must teach and students must learn at a level of fluency that exceeds the apparent expectations of the grade-level standard.** For this reason, teachers must be knowledgeable and talented in teaching the content, skills, and processes described in standards immediately below and above as well as at their own grade-level assignment.

FORMAT OF THE STANDARDS DOCUMENT

Standards

The standards are the targets all students need to meet at the proficient level by the end of each grade level. The standards are presented in two formats. The first format organizes the standards by grade level so a student, parent, classroom teacher, administrator, or local school board member can quickly review what learning is expected at each specific grade. The Bloom's Taxonomy level of cognitive challenge is listed in the standards document to make clear the level at which each standard should be assessed.

At grades 9 through 12, schools teach skills and courses in a variety of configurations to accommodate students and school personnel, especially in rural settings. For this reason, the grade-level standards are grouped into core and advanced standards. The core high school standards include the content, skills, and knowledge all students are expected to meet by graduation. The advanced high school standards apply to students who have completed the core standards and choose an advanced social studies curriculum. Students who plan to attend post-secondary educational institutions should complete social studies courses reflected in the advanced standards. However, these advanced social studies standards may also be incorporated into elective social studies courses that all students should have the opportunity to learn and master.

All standards in each grade level and the core standards for high school need to be met at the proficient level by the time students are tested for these skills on the state assessments. For early grades not assessed on the state assessments, students need to master the standards at each grade level in order to be adequately prepared to meet the next grade-level standards and subsequently, to achieve the proficient level at the grade levels tested.

In the second format, the standards are provided side-by-side on a table so the alignment of standards from grade-to-grade is immediately apparent. This section of the document contains content goals, indicators, and grade-level standards. Each has a role in shaping the expected outcomes for South Dakota students.

- **Strands** are the broad conceptual content areas that define social studies. They are: U. S. History, World History, Geography, Civics (Government), and Economics.
- **Indicators** are the common threads of a strand that represent expected outcomes for all students preparing to graduate from South Dakota schools.
- **Grade-level content standards** represent expected outcomes for students completing each grade level.
- **Grade-level supporting skills** represent enabling skills students may need to be taught in order to achieve the standards. Those identified by a (•) bullet are enablers to the specific grade-level standard. Those identified by a checkmark (✓) are enablers to the next higher grade-level standards that are related to current grade-level standards and thus may be introduced at this earlier grade level.
- **Examples** represent some possible materials, activities, or sub-skills classroom instructors could use in teaching the standards or supporting skills. Examples are not provided where the meaning of the standard should be evident to the reader. While the intention of providing examples is to clarify what is intended in terms of the complexity and level of challenge of the standard, these examples do not represent actual test items that will appear on the assessment.

Performance Descriptors

The performance descriptors are organized into proficiency levels. These proficiency levels describe the content and processes that a student at a given proficiency level would be expected to know, demonstrate, or perform. To identify increasing proficiency in social studies, the levels are labeled as follows:

- **Advanced:** A student performing at the advanced level exceeds expectations for that grade level. The student is able to perform the content standards for the grade at a high level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency beyond that specified by the grade-level standards.
- **Proficient:** A student performing at the proficient level meets expectations for that grade level. The student is able to perform the content standards for the grade at the level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency specified by the grade-level standards.
- **Basic:** A student performing at the basic level performs below expectations for that grade level. The student is able to perform some of the content standards for the grade below the level of difficulty, complexity, or fluency specified by the grade-level standards.

A student performing below the basic level is unable to perform the content standards for the grade. Therefore, no description is provided below the basic level.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Since this document uses appropriate social studies terminology, a reader may occasionally encounter an unfamiliar term. In order to assist the reader with terminology

used in this document, a **glossary** has been included with specific definitions to clarify intended meaning.

In addition, a **resource list** is provided in the appendix as a sampling of possible information sources. Because new resources are constantly becoming available, this list is intended to be neither an exhaustive nor a required list of resources.

A MESSAGE TO TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, SUPERINTENDENTS, AND OTHERS WHO WILL USE THE DOCUMENT

The Social Studies Standards Revision Committee was made up of a group of K-16 teachers who collaborated to establish a starting point for reaching South Dakota's goal: each student performing to at least the proficient level.

A set of standards is simply a place to begin—it lays the foundation for measurable, consistent, high-level student learning; however, teachers must consider the needs of their individual students and select the methods that will work best for their classrooms. Examples and lists of supporting skills have been provided to clarify but not limit the meaning of the standards. ***The curriculum of each district must provide students with rigor and topics beyond those of the standards in order to ensure mastery.***

Clearly, there is more to teaching and learning than these standards. Adjustments will need to be made for those students who exceed the standards and for those who cannot easily meet them. The standards are a starting point in creating an environment where students can learn to live and thrive in a constantly changing, increasingly complex world.

CONCLUSION

The committee provides, through the standards document, a framework for the teaching and learning of social studies content. The committee wishes to emphasize, however, that the real goal of social studies teachers is to inspire students to become committed, participating citizens. This requires that students develop skills and dispositions that are difficult to assess. Teachers who accomplish this goal with students practice the art as well as the science of teaching. They are professionals who prioritize content that leads to citizenship skill development, beyond the achievement of the stated social studies standards, rather than teaching simply to either “cover” the material or teaching to the test. Social studies is so much more than facts and dates; it is the singular discipline that can help students shape their lives, if teachers create that kind of atmosphere. The committee members believe that civic virtues are embedded within the standards but are not specifically addressed due to the inability to measure them, i.e., volunteerism, honesty, loyalty. They are confident that teachers will emphasize the importance of these vital components of social studies teaching and learning.